

Better Homes and Centers



Michigan Department of
Social Services
Division of
Child Day Care Licensing

Vol. No. 7 1985
Guiding and Guarding
Children

DISCIPLINE: BETWEEN PARENT AND PROVIDER

*By Betty Garlick, Child Advocate
Early Childhood Education Specialist*

Life would be chaotic without planned behavior expectations for all of us. Driving would be haphazard without a plan for the even flow of traffic both in direction and speed. All areas of our lives run more smoothly when there is a plan of action. It is equally important for child care homes and centers to have such a plan to make it easier for the children, their parents and the child care providers.

Often there is difficulty in understanding what is meant by a variety of names given to the process of helping children grow into responsible, self-directed adults. The term discipline is often used but misunderstood. In Webster's Dictionary, the preferred meaning of the word discipline is "training that develops self-control, character, or efficiency." The definition of discipline as punishment or chastisement is not acceptable.

Good teachers and administrators do not think of discipline as a behind-the-woodshed technique. On the contrary, it is more a matter of understanding and personal concern for the child and the greater fulfillment of the child's attitudes, abilities and aspirations in our society. Dignity and worth of the individual are basic values in our society. The individual child is not likely to see herself possessing these values if not treated with dignity by her caregiver. It is easy to recognize discipline in forms such as scolding, denial, threats and separation from the group. It is less easy to recognize it in the forms of understanding, teaching, and the rescheduling of activities. These are important aspects in child management techniques.

Since a child is receiving guidance in his home as well as in the child care setting, it is very important that parents and caregivers pay close attention to consistency. This requires communication between the parent and provider. A pre-enrollment conference should be scheduled to discuss and agree upon a discipline policy. Once a decision has been made to enroll the child, the cooperation goes on in the form of reading materials, conferences, newsletters and brief discussions. When good communication exists, the child will not be confused about expectations.

(continued on page 2)

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

In the past I have discussed the issue of excessive child discipline. Punishment is often confused with discipline. Webster defines punishment as "a penalty imposed on an offender for a crime or wrongdoing." Discipline on the other hand, is defined as "to train or develop by instruction and exercise in self-control."

The Department often receives complaints from parents whose children have been "disciplined", resulting in the child being physically abused.

Children need to be disciplined within the context of the above definition rather than being punished as an act of retribution by the provider. Caring for children requires a great deal of patience and self-control. When these virtues are lost, the child becomes an unfortunate victim.

Preschool children are just beginning to develop self-control and to become responsible for their actions. They are also learning to express their feelings in ways that are acceptable. You help them by setting consistent limits and by appropriate responses to their behavior.

Children misbehave for a number of reasons. They may be tired, hungry, or in need of attention. Children often act out to test whether or not you care for them enough to follow through on your expectations for them. As a provider, you may find it necessary to devote more positive attention to some children until they "feel" more secure and accepted in your home or center.

When children do act out, there are many positive ways of disciplining them that involve being firm and consistent in your expectations while not causing them to feel shame or humiliation. Children act best when they know the rules, and when they know that you expect the rules to be followed.

Discipline is not just getting a child to "mind". It involves helping a child to gain control over his or her own behavior. Positive discipline methods will help a child toward self-discipline and independence. In so doing, you will be making a meaningful contribution to the child's development.

Ted deWolf, Director
Division of Child Day Care Licensing

Ongoing inservice training in a center is necessary to have common goals for the children. It can also be a time to discuss what to do when problems arise and an opportunity to share successes and concerns. Home day care providers often get this support from each other as they form provider organizations where they can share concerns, successes and problems.

Some parents give permission for the child to be spanked at the discretion of the child care provider. Psychologist John Valaesek from Kansas writes, "Spanking is the first one-half inch up the yardstick of violence. It is often followed by hitting, rape, murder and assassination. All involve the intentional use of pain against another person against his will." What a child often learns is that it is often o.k. to hit. Is this what we really want to teach children? Spanking closes the door to more positive techniques.

This quote from *Caring*, a National Association for the Education of Young Children publication speaks to a good position to be taken in guiding children:

When we think clearly about what we want for children, ours and other people's, it is obvious that we want them to grow up to be our peers. If we keep that fact in the forefront of our attitudes toward children, we might avoid many of the fruitless battles and instead serve as **guides, welcomers** and **protectors**, as children make their valiant efforts to grow up and join us.¹

With this quote in mind, these guidance principles are offered:

1. *Get the child's attention - move close, call her by name.*
2. *Be consistent.*
3. *Speak slowly, specifically, softly and in simple vocabulary geared to the child's age level.*
4. *Relate to the child on her eye level - squat, kneel, talk directly to the child, looking into her face.*
5. *Treat the child as a "future peer" or equal.*
6. *Listen to the child. Be aware of non-verbal as well as verbal communication.*
7. *Know the child: what has been happening in her life.*
8. *Be positive.*
9. *Enjoy the children.*

Growing up is a continuum in which older people help younger ones and those further along reach back to help others. If we can accept our own places in the continuum and are in touch with our own feelings, we will be ready and able to help children as they struggle with the arduous and gratifying task of growing up.²

¹Rita Warren, *Caring Supporting Children's Growth*, National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1977, pg. 6.

²Ibid, p. 45.



POSITIVE DISCIPLINE THROUGH APPROPRIATE PROGRAM SCHEDULING, ACTIVITIES AND EQUIPMENT

*By Judy Levine, Supervisor
Division of Child Day Care Licensing*

There are several variables that influence the behavior of children in a child care setting which are controlled by the caregivers. These include program planning and implementation, program schedule, program components, and room arrangement.

1. Program planning and implementation

Lessons should be well thought through before implementation. Activities should reflect the developmental needs, interests and abilities of children. The plans should include the equipment (every day or special) which will be needed in order for the activities to be successful. Equipment may be set up either at the end of the day for the next morning, or in the early morning, before the children arrive. Trays or baskets may be used to help them organize all the materials and equipment needed for each activity. By being prepared for the children before they come, you will be able to give your full attention to the children and children will have fewer reasons to engage in non-constructive activities. The need for disciplining children should therefore be reduced.

2. Program schedule

Schedules of activities provide caregivers and children with a guideline of activities and events which follow one another. The schedule of activities should also flow smoothly providing children with opportunities for passive play, such as large group, story time, and music time, and active play such as free play, creative movement, and outdoor activities.

At no time should children be expected to sit for more than 15 or 20 minutes, unless they show by their actions that they continue to be attentive to the activity. The caregiver should refrain from scheduling several sitting activities in a row. Young children generally do not have the ability or attention span to sit so long.

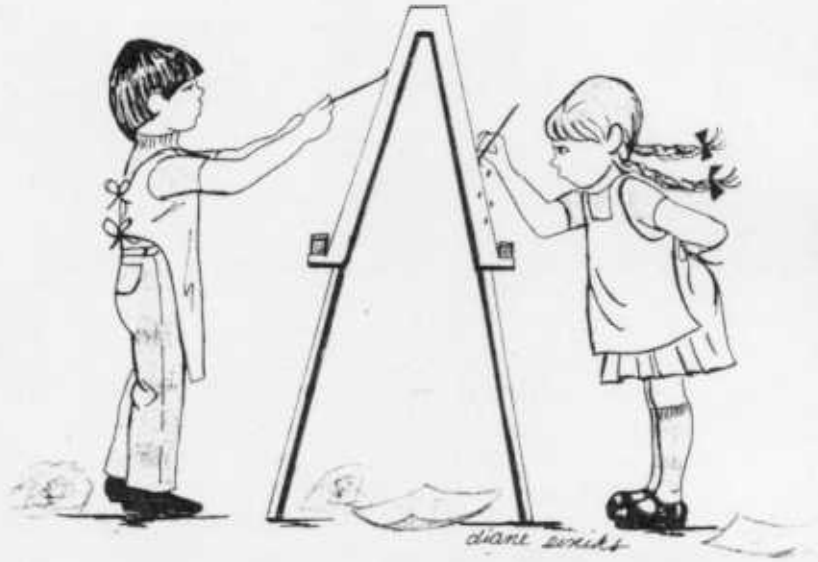
The schedule of activities should be flexible, thereby reflecting the children's needs and interests. If an activity does not hold the children's attention, cut it short. If children are engrossed in an activity, lengthen the time of involvement. Little time, if any, should be given where children sit idly waiting for another activity to begin. Books and records are two excellent means of keeping children's attention during transition periods and at the same time promoting language development.

Well scheduled activities will result in a more successful smooth operation and will reduce the need to discipline children.

3. Program component

Activities which are appropriate to the age, abilities, developmental needs and interests of the children enrolled in the program should be offered.

They need to be challenging, inviting, and interesting.



You may wish to include special activities for inclement weather days or just to change the routine. Throughout the day, and especially during free play, a variety of activities should be offered simultaneously to allow children to choose only those in which they wish to participate. Activities during this time might include dramatic play, block and vehicle play, manipulative toys, art activities, science activities and experiments, food preparation and large muscle activities.

Activities for older children might include box games, arts and crafts activities, science experiments, food preparation activities, and more competitive sports.

Exploring activities which promote discovery and learning generally keep children's attention and involvement. There are fewer opportunities for non-constructive behavior to develop and therefore fewer instances where a child may need to be disciplined.

4. Room arrangement

Equipment should be arranged so that the more quiet activities are grouped closer together and the more active, noisy activities are grouped together. Each area should be inviting and contain enough space so that one activity does not interfere with another. Toys can be sorted and stored in individually marked containers on marked shelves so children can find equipment as well as return it to its proper place.

Observe the successes and weaknesses of the room arrangement and change it accordingly. Since caregivers and children "live in a space" for a good portion of their day, the environment must be conducive to learning and just being. Proper utilization of the equipment and space will reduce the need for discipline.

All child care programs require planning and organization. The degree and type of organization, will vary based on the number of children in your program.

Tips for Handling Common Situations With Children

This article is excerpted from "Tips For Handling Common Situations With Children" in the *Texas Child Care Quarterly* - Winter 1983 issue and reprinted with permission

The Child:	It may mean the child:	So do not:	You might try:
Becomes angry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not successful in doing something important to the child personally. Has been told stop, no, and don't too many times. Is being made to do something he or she doesn't want to do. Feels frustrated from too many demands by adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become angry. Allow a tantrum to become extreme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembering anger is normal and may be expected. Observing when the child gets angry and at whom the anger is targeted. Observing if the child is able to express anger in acceptable ways. Providing a safe outlet for the child's feelings such as vigorous play, punching bag, or finger painting.
Won't share.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is too young (under 3 years of age). Needs experience in owning and sharing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snatch from the child. Scold the child. Tell the child you do not like him or her. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loving the child and helping the child feel secure. Being a fair umpire in children's squabbles. Observing the situations in which the child has difficulty sharing. Being sure the child has things that are just his or hers—allowing children to experience ownership. Having enough materials for each child.
Hurts other children or you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is too young to understand. Is inexperienced. Is angry. Has troubled feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get angry. Punish or hurt the child. Force the child to say, "I'm sorry." Make the child feel badly by shaming or ignoring the child or withdrawing love. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending to the hurt child first and involving the child who did the hurt in the comforting. Observing when it happens, how often it happens, who is hurt, and what happened before the hurting. Helping the child feel loved. Quietly separating the children. Diverting their attention. Taking the hurting objects away, calmly and firmly. Begin teaching the child that hurting is not something to do.



The child:	It may mean the child:	So do not:	You might try:
Bites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is still trying to put everything in the mouth (toddler). Is teething and needs objects or harder foods to chew on (toddler). Is using biting instead of words to communicate (toddler). Does not understand that biting hurts (toddler). Feels frustrated and has not developed other, more positive coping skills (preschooler). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bite the child back. Encourage another child to bite the child. Make the child bite soap. Force the child to say, "I'm sorry." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing close supervision of the biter and being ready to step in to protect other children. Comforting the victim first. Tell the biter that biting hurts. Involve the biter in comforting the victim by bringing a cool, wet towel to put on bite. Providing an object to bite, such as a pillow or chewy toy. Observing when the child bites, who the victim is, and the child's reaction after biting. Helping children use words to cope with frustration. Thinking about your time schedule, equipment, activities, guidance techniques. Are they creating or reducing stress for the children? Informing parents of the problem, stressing how typical biting is, and describing your plan to handle the problem.
Can't fall asleep.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is learning a new routine. Does not feel sleepy. Feels afraid. Does not feel comfortable. Wants attention. Is interested in other things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completely darken the room. Reward to bribe the child. Threaten the child. Scold or punish the child. Put the child to bed as punishment. Tie or restrain the child. Disrupt the entire nap time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning a napping chart that carefully places children in the room. Avoiding over-stimulation near nap time. Reading, singing, or playing with the child before putting the children to bed. Playing soft background music. Seeing that the child's needs are met before going to bed. Tucking the child in cot or mat with true affection. Allowing the child to look at books or play with quiet toys. Offering assurance that you will wake the child up (before snack, when the others wake, first, or whatever is important). Putting the child back to bed kindly but firmly. Planning quiet activities for children as they wake up so they don't just lie on the cot.
Refuses to eat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is showing the normal decrease in appetite that occurs about age 2-1/2 when growth slows down. Is not hungry. Does not feel well. Dislikes a particular flavor or texture. (Children's tastes are stronger than adults'.) Is imitating someone. Is trying to be independent. Is trying to get attention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a scene. Reward or bribe the child to eat. Threaten the child. Punish the child for not eating. Force the child to eat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being casual and calm. Making food interesting and attractive. Enjoying food with the child. Introduce new foods a bite at a time and only along with favored foods. Helping the child learn to feed and serve himself. Serving small portions. Serving rejected food in a new way. Involving the child in preparation of food.



THE CHILD PROTECTION LAW YOUR OBLIGATION AS A PROVIDER

By Carole Grates, Center Lic. Consultant
Saginaw County

In recent months we have become increasingly aware that child abuse can occur in out of home care situations as well as in the child's own home.

Child care providers need to acquaint themselves with the amended Child Protection Law, Act 238 of the Public Acts of 1975, effective 4/1/85. The amended law requires that **all regulated child care providers** who have reasonable cause to **suspect** child abuse or neglect must immediately make an oral report to the Department of Social Services whether the abuse happened in the child's home or elsewhere. Within 72 hours after making the oral report, a written report must be filed with the department.

The report must contain the following information:

- name and age of the child and a description of the abuse or neglect
- names and addresses of child's parents or guardians, if available

Other information that should be given to assist in the investigation includes:

- anything that could be the cause of the abuse or neglect
- the manner in which the abuse or neglect occurred.

The written report should be mailed to the County Department of Social Services in which the child suspected of being abused or neglected is found.

The Act does provide for the confidentiality of the reporting person. The person's identity shall be disclosed only with her consent or by judicial process. The reporting person acting in good faith is also immune from civil or criminal liability. It is presumed that a reporting person is acting in good faith. Furthermore, if the reporting person is a member of the staff of an agency required to report suspected child abuse or neglect, she shall not be dismissed or otherwise punished for making the report.

Although not currently required by law, child care centers and day care homes should consider developing a written policy regarding the reporting of child abuse. Such a policy should include:

1. The responsibility, moral and legal, of all staff to report the suspected abuse or neglect.
2. A description of some signs of abuse or neglect the staff can use as indicators.
3. The reporting procedure of the home or center to whom the report is made and who has the responsibility of reporting to the Department of Social Services.
4. The need for confidentiality.
5. The possibility that the home or center may have to testify.

This policy can be a part of the staff handbook or the written policies and should be discussed with all staff when they are hired and with parents when children are enrolled.

The protection of children is the obligation of all who work with them. Child care centers and day care homes are often their first line of defense. Copies of Act 238 are available from your local Department of Social Services. Give one to each staff person tomorrow.

PICK THE BEST RESPONSE

By Dorothy Pinsky Labensohn, Iowa State University
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Here's a self-test you can use to gauge your own responses to discipline situations.

Under each example, check the response which you think is most useful. To check your responses with ours, look at the bottom of this article.

1. When a toddler reaches out for a pot set on the kitchen stove, you
 - a. firmly swat the child's rear and shout "No, No."
 - b. hurry to the stove, remove the pot, and tell the child that it is hot.
2. When a four-year-old spills milk at the table, you
 - a. provide a cloth to clean up the mess.
 - b. say "Clumsy! What's the matter with you?"
3. After a five-year-old boy hits a three-year-old girl for knocking over the tower he was building in the living room, you
 - a. get angry at the five-year-old and punish him by sending him to a room by himself without toys or books.
 - b. calm down the younger child, then ask the five-year-old why he hit her and suggest other ways the five-year-old could deal with the situation.
4. A three-year-old is throwing blocks at the wall, you
 - a. slap the child's hands and take the blocks away.
 - b. take the next block out of the child's hands and explain that "blocks are for building, not for throwing," then show the child how to combine the blocks with another toy (a doll or car) to build something.
5. A five-year-old girl swears at another, you
 - a. tell the child that is she wants to talk like that, she can go into another room because no one wants to hear it.
 - b. threaten to wash out her mouth with soap.

(Answers: 1. b, 2. a, 3. b, 4. b, 5. a)

A child hits a child,
and we call it aggression.

A child hits an adult,
and we call it hostility.

An adult hits an adult,
and we call it assault and battery.

An adult hits a child,
and we call it DISCIPLINE. (Gnott)

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RESOURCES — GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

A Guide to Discipline for Family Caregivers, B. Owen, Comm. Coordinated Child Care, Detroit, Michigan 1977.

Child Guidance Techniques, Bulletin 565, Cooperative Extension Service, M.S.U., East Lansing, MI 48824.

Dear Parent of Young Children Series, Bulletin 423, Cooperative Extension Service, M.S.U., East Lansing, MI 48824.

- A Do you Expect Too Much?
- B "Naughty" or Learning?
- F Setting the Stage for Discipline
- G Setting Limits in Discipline
- I Handling Misbehavior
- J A Young Child Looks at Himself
- L A Young Child Looks at Parents
- N Questions Parents Ask
- O Children and Values

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk, 1980, 256 pp., Rawson Wade, \$11.95.

Just Mamma and Me, Christine Eber, Lollipop Power, Inc., Chapel Hill, N.C., Library of Congress, NI 75-30308, 1979.

Liberated Parents: Liberated Children, Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, Avon Books.

Individual Versus Group Needs: An Artificial Dichotomy, Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries Library, 419 Cynthia, Flushing, MI 48423 - 25¢.

Parents Are Teachers, Ruth Bowdin, Webster's International Tutoring Systems, Inc., 1976 (5729) Cloverland Pl., Brentwood, Tenn. 37027. The following is part of a collection of books in this series.

- Instead of Nagging
- Words that Win Children

Parent Power: A Guide to Responsible Child Rearing, Logan Right, 1980, Morrow, \$7.95.

Self-Esteem is a Family Affair, Jean Illsley Clarke, Winston Press.

Without Spanking or Spoiling, Elizabeth Crary, Publisher Parent Press, Seattle, Washington. Available through the Children's Collection, Ann Arbor, MI (313) 668-8056.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR INFANT ROOM

1 Our number-one concern at all times should be safety of all the infants.

2 Three good rules to remember concerning discipline are:

- 1) *Children should not be allowed to hurt themselves.*
- 2) *Children should not be allowed to hurt each other.*
- 3) *Children should not be allowed to hurt their toys.*

If you notice a behavior that goes against these rules, *step in immediately*. Do not allow the problem to go from bad to worse.

3 Instead of saying "No" and "Don't" to the infants, offer a positive direction—that is, tell the child what he/she *can* do, not what he/she *can't* do.

4 Redirection is the preferred method of discipline. If a child is doing something inappropriate, try giving him something else to do or show him a more appropriate behavior.

5 Never leave an infant in an unsupervised area—you should be able to see all infants at all times.

6 Remember that our acts set an example for children—if you don't want something done, don't do it yourself.

Notice Posted In The Infant Room Of A Learning Tree Center

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PROVIDER'S CORNER

In a previous edition the editorial staff requested your suggestions on how to handle day care burnout in your own children. We received responses from Monna Johnson of Farmington Hills, Paula Weber of Kalamazoo and LaVerna Calloway-Cash of Ann Arbor. Some of their suggestions were similar so we have summarized their responses as follows:

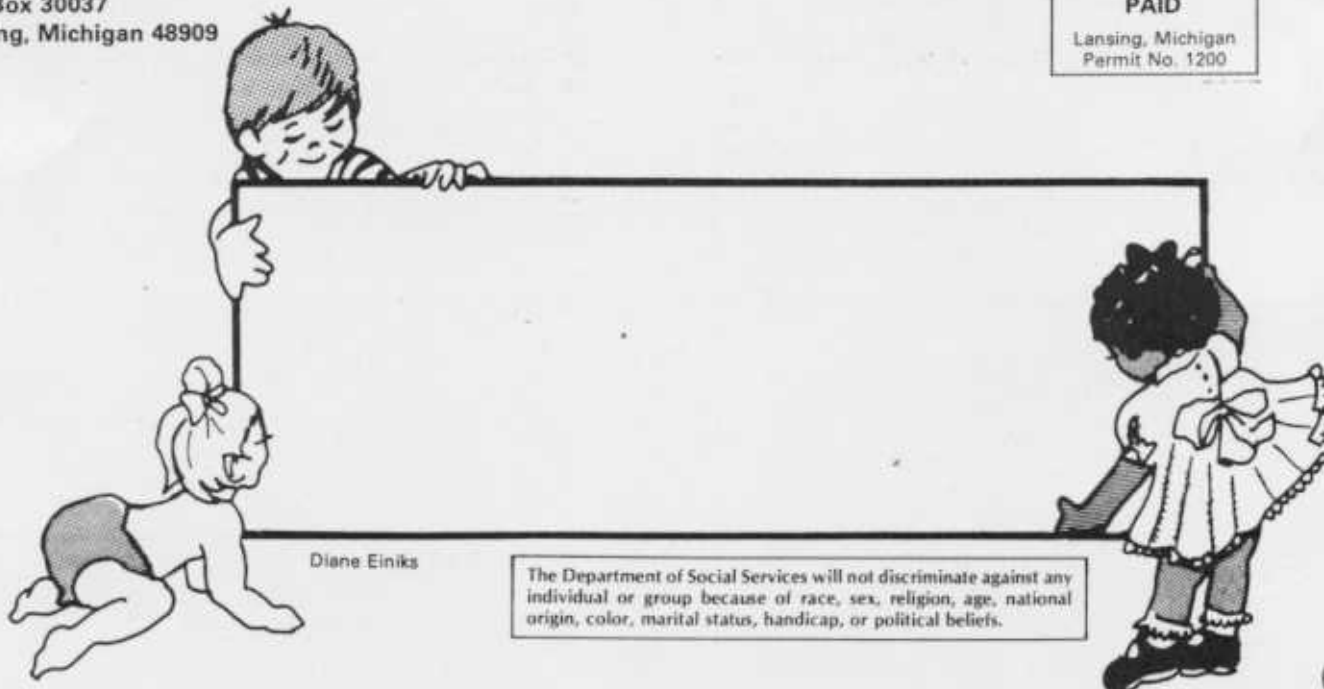
1. Remove cribs from your children's rooms.
2. Don't allow day care children in your children's rooms unless invited.
3. Don't make your children share all of their toys—let them put special ones away.
4. Special after school classes for your children, e.g., ballet, gymnastics, art.
5. Listen to your children's concerns and ideas.
6. Have special family outings.
7. Have special meals when only your children are home.
8. Arrange outings for your children which do not include any day care children.
9. Spend time alone with your children every day—even if it's only a few minutes.
10. Cuddle your children often and reassure them of your love.



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